

Proclamation 8798 of April 9, 2012**Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2012**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In April of 1890, delegates from countries throughout the Americas gathered in Washington, D.C., united in the belief that cooperation would lead to a more peaceful, secure, and prosperous hemisphere. Demonstrating remarkable foresight and a commitment to progress, they came together to forge a community of nations that would one day become the Organization of American States—a body dedicated to the pursuit of democracy and economic opportunity for all our people. During Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we celebrate this legacy of international partnership and renew the bonds of friendship and shared responsibility that join us in common purpose.

The United States is proud to be part of the inter-American community. From the shores of Canada to the cliffs of Cape Horn, our hopes are bound together—to create greater social and economic opportunity for all, to ensure safety for our citizens, to build strong and accountable democratic institutions, to secure a clean energy future. Our Nation remains committed to working together with partners across our hemisphere to achieve these goals.

Last October, I was proud to sign legislation to implement Free Trade Agreements with Panama and Colombia that will support American jobs, open new markets to our exports, and spur growth here at home and throughout the region. These Agreements strengthen our partnerships, and they reflect our commitment to supporting democracy and economic opportunity throughout the Americas. We are also working to fuel education and innovation across our hemisphere. One year ago, we announced the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative to encourage more of our students to study abroad in Latin America and more Latin American students to study here in the United States, fostering lifelong connections between our nations that will be keys to progress. And as we move forward, we continue to support strong democracies and democratic institutions that promote transparency in government, respect the rule of law, ensure a robust civil society, respect human rights, and deliver public services in effective and equitable ways.

This week, we gather in Cartagena, Colombia, for the Sixth Summit of the Americas. As 34 Heads of State and Government come together to chart a path toward tomorrow's horizons, let us recall that though we are stewards of unique and varied histories, our nations are partners in progress. During Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we celebrate our shared heritage, reflect on the gains we have made, and recommit to advancing the common prosperity and security of all our people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 14, 2012, as Pan American Day and April 8 through April 14, 2012, as Pan American Week. I urge the governors of the 50 States, the governor of the Commonwealth

Proc. 8799

Title 3—The President

of Puerto Rico, and the officials of the other areas under the flag of the United States of America to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8799 of April 9, 2012

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2012

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

For more than 200 years, members of our Armed Forces have upheld an oath to protect and defend. In times of war, generations have answered our country's call with courage and valor, braving the peril of combat and pressing onward in the face of tremendous adversity. Their extraordinary service reflects our highest ideals, and their sacrifice will forever live on in our national memory. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we pay solemn tribute to those patriots who gave their freedom to preserve our own.

Thousands of America's sons and daughters have suffered unspeakably as captives in foreign lands. Many prisoners of war experienced physical torture and profound anguish, subjected to inhumane treatment and cut off from their comrades, their country, and their loved ones. Some would never return. Yet, in the direst circumstances, these service members demonstrated indomitable courage and unbreakable resolve. They stood fast for what they believed in, making immeasurable sacrifices for the millions they protected. At home, spouses, children, parents, and friends called upon that same spirit of perseverance to sustain them through long periods of prayer and uncertainty.

When he chronicled the experiences of our GIs during World War II, Ernie Pyle wrote that their world can never be known to the rest of us. Though the sacrifices they made and the burdens they bore may defy our full understanding, it is our moral obligation to keep faith with our men and women in uniform, our veterans, and their families—to honor their service through the support of a grateful Nation. Today, we recognize heroes who endured one of war's most tragic costs. For them, and for all who have served, let us rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the sacred trust we share with all those who have worn the uniform of the United States of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2012, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day of remembrance by honoring all American prisoners of war, our service members, and our veterans. I also call upon Federal, State,